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ACTION ARA-15

Dφ49 R

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 HA-05
TRSE-00 L-03 IO-14 /088 W

P 081521Z FEB 79
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9403

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 1084

E.O. 12065: XGDS-1 (3/8/09) (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH SECGENERAL OF ARGENTINE
AIR FORCE

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

1. ENTIRE TEXT.

2. PRIOR TO HIS RECENT RETIREMENT, GENERAL AGOSTI, FORMER JUNTA MEMBER AND AF COMMANDER, COVERED THE COUNTRY-SIDE SPEAKING ON THE NEED FOR ARGENTINA TO RETURN TO THE "RULE OF LAW". I BELIEVED IT TIMELY THAT I GET SOME OF AF THINKING IN VIEW OF AGOSTI'S STATEMENTS. I HAD LUNCH WITH BRIGADIER LAMI DOZO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF AIR FORCE, AT EMBASSY RESIDENCE AND DISCUSSED FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

3. LABOR STRIFE: LAMI DOZA CHOSE LABOR PROBLEMS AS HIS FIRST SUBJECT AND GAVE IT TOP PRIORITY. HE WAS MOST EMPHATIC IN TELLING ME THE PERIOD BETWEEN MARCH 15-APRIL 15 WOULD BE TURBULENT. LAMI DOZO EXPRESSED CONCERN AND FEAR OF SERIOUS LABOR STRIKES TAKING PLACE. I INQUIRED ABOUT REASONS FOR POSSIBLE STRIKES. HE RAPIDLY REPLIED MARTINEZ DE HOZ WAS LABOR'S POISON. HE FORESAW MARTINEZ DE HOZ LEAVING AS PRESIDENT VIDELA WAS NOW COMING AROUND TO THE PROPOSITION OF APPOINTING A NEW MINISTER OF ECONOMY. LAMI DOZO ALSO VOLUNTEERED INFORMATION RETIRED ADMIRAL MASSERA AND A FEW

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UNSCRUPULOUS GENERALS WERE PROMPTING AND PROMOTING LABOR UNREST.

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LAMI DOZO WAS CONFIDENT THAT WITH THE FIRING OF MARTINEZ DE HOZ, MORE FLEXIBILITY TOWARDS NORMALIZATION OF LABOR UNIONS AND SALARY INCREASES WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO PROBABLY DIFFUSE PROJECTED STRIKES. HE MADE IT CLEAR BOTH VIDELA AND VIOLA KNEW WHAT WAS IN THE WIND AND WERE TAKING MEASURES TO COUNTER ACT POSSIBLE LABOR STRIFE. HE INVITED ME TO LUNCH ON MARCH 15 AS HE BY THAT TIME WOULD HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF GOA'S PANORAMA.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS: I EXPLAINED TO LAMI DOZO RELATIONS BETWEEN USG AND GOA CONTINUED TO BE HAMPERED BY CONTINUED REPORTS ON DISAPPEARANCES AND ABUSES TOWARDS PEOPLE ARRESTED. HE AGREED THERE WAS NO EXCUSE FOR ANY DISAPPEARANCES AT ANY TIME. HE THEN EXPLAINED ALL THREE ARMED FORCES BRANCHES, PLUS POLICE, HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY REPRIMANDED FOR CONTINUED OPERATIONS. LAMI DOZO TOLD ME HE WAS EXTREMELY CONFIDENT THE WHOLE HUMAN RIGHTS PICTURE WAS CHANGING AND THIS COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO RECENT MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS. HE SAID IN ALL PROBABILITY THE NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES DID NOT EXCEED TEN PERSONS DURING JANUARY. HE ALSO SAID NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES WOULD CONTINUE TO DECREASE. HE SAID BY JUNE THE NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES WOULD BE DOWN TO TWO OR THREE. HE EXPLAINED ONE CAN ALWAYS ADD TWO OR THREE TO ANY LIST AS SOME OF THESE NORMALLY DISAPPEAR FOR PERSONAL REASONS OR JUST PLAIN CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT.

5. GENERAL SUAREZ MASON: I ASKED LAMI DOZO TO GIVE ME HIS VIEWS ON THE PROS AND CONS OF GENERAL SUAREZ MASON'S ASSUMPTION OF THE POST OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF. HE CATEGORIZED IT AS A SHREWD MANEUVER ON THE PART OF GENERAL VIOLA. IN LAMI DOZO'S OPINION SUAREZ MASON HAS NOW BECOME A TEAM PLAYER,
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WHO IS WILLING TO TAKE HIS TIME FOR VIOLA TO STEP DOWN. LAMI DOZO SAID HE KNEW SUAREZ MASON WELL. HE STATED SUAREZ MASON IS BRIGHT ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE HE IS ONE STEP REMOVED FROM BEING ARMY COMMANDER. THEREFORE, IN HIS OPINION, SUAREZ MASON WILL BE PATIENT. LAMI DOZO THEN STATED THIS WAS NOT TRUE OF GENERAL MENENDEZ, WHOSE AMBITIONS RAN AHEAD OF THIS THINKING. HE SAID MENENDEZ WAS A TRUE MILITARY PROFESSIONAL, WITHOUT ONE IOTA OF POLITICAL SENSE. HE CONCLUDED THE SUBJECT BY STATING THAT'S WHY MENENDEZ HAS TO BE FEARED.

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5. IAHRC VISIT: LAMI DOZO SUPPORTED THE VISIT OF IAHRC. HIS COMMENT WAS THAT NOW GOA HAS TO GET OFF ITS "DUFF" AND PUT THE HOUSE IN ORDER. HE STATED A SERIOUS EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO FREE ASAP THOSE PRISONERS WHO WERE ENCARCERATED BY PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS. HE ALSO SAID A CURRENT REVIEW IS UNDERWAY ON ALL PEN PRISONERS. HE STATED HIS HOPE THAT THROUGH RIGHT OF OPTION CONCEPT PRISONS WOULD BE CLEARED OF ALL MARGINAL CASES.

6. CRYSTAL BALL GAZING: LAMI DOZO SAID HE HAD LOOKED AT THE CRYSTAL BALL AND FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE IT ALL LEAD TO OPTIMISM. HE STATED SOME PROBABILITY MINOR LABOR STRIFE WOULD ENSUE BUT IT WOULD BE OVERCOME. HE ALSO MENTIONED SOME POSSIBLE INTERNAL PROBLEMS IN SEPTEMBER, BUT EXPLAINED THESE WOULD ALSO BE RESOLVED FAVORABLY. HE GAVE NO EXPLANATION ON THE SEPTEMBER PROBLEMS. LAMI DOZO OPINED WHEN THE MARCH-APRIL AND POSSIBLY SEPTEMBER PROBLEMS WERE RESOLVED FAVORABLY THEN ARGENTINA WOULD BE ON A TAKE-OFF POINT, BOTH ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY. HE FORESAW MORE CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION EFFECTIVE EARLY 1980.

7. COMMENT: BRIGADIER LAMI DOZO IS AN EXCELLENT EMBASSY CONTACT. HE HAS BEEN IN THE UNITED STATES AND ADMIRES IT. HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH. HE IS KNOWN TO SPEAK WITH CANDOR. ALL EMBASSY STAFF MEMBERS GIVE LAMI DOZO HIGH MARKS FOR CREDIBILITY.

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